

course upon his trustworthy horse, Trigger. The second part of this cartoon shows another young and impressionable child in 1998 with a nose-ring and his baseball cap on sideways. In his ignorance, the child of 1998 thinks of Roy Rogers as the fast food chain out east, not as the great American hero. Oh, and when it comes to 'Trigger' all he can think of is the next drive-by shooting.

Now it seems the creator of this cartoon has captured the essence of what makes my service to America so important. For young people like this poster-boy of 1998—nationalism has been replaced by an individualism that is self-indulgent. Too many of my peers remain blissfully ignorant of what their allegiance to America really means. An allegiance that requires an informed electorate. But more and more we are less and less informed. One survey revealed that a 1/3 of all college students firmly believed in ghosts, Atlantis, flying saucers, and yes even Big Foot.

Similarly on a quiz of general knowledge, answers came back saying that the Great Gatsby was a magician in the 1930's, and that Socrates was an American Indian Chieftain.

While this ignorance might seem some what amusing at first, Gertrude Himmelfarb, a writer for Commentary magazine, argues that this society, which is devaluing virtues like ambition, leadership and heroism, is in danger of losing the character of the people and their sense of nationality and spirit of patriotism. But there is still hope for the future . . . and it begins with my service to America. And with your service. And with the service of every American. We are all responsible for reducing the ignorance and apathy that challenge our "nation indivisible". If we are to make the pledge of allegiance meaningful, then we must give full meaning to every word. And that's my service, my pledge of allegiance, my pledge to America. A pledge worth remembering.

FOLIC ACID PROMOTION AND BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION ACT OF 1999

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, today, I, along with my colleague Congresswoman JO ANN EMERSON, am introducing the Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999. This bipartisan bill, with 102 Democratic and Republican original cosponsors, is being introduced in the Senate by Senators ABRAHAM, KOHL, and BOND.

The Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999 will provide for a national folic acid education program to prevent birth defects.

Each year an estimated 2,500 babies are born in the United States with serious birth defects of the brain and spine, called neural tube defects. These neural tube defects cause crippling lifelong physical disabilities and at times, even death.

However, up to 70 percent of neural tube defects could be prevented if women of child-bearing age consumed 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. That means women need to eat a healthy diet and take a daily multivitamin. It's that simple.

Women need to be taking folic acid before and during their first trimester of pregnancy because these neural tube defects occur very

early in pregnancy, before most women know that they are pregnant and because roughly 50 percent of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned.

The problem is that the majority of women are not aware of the benefits of folic acid. A 1997 March of Dimes national survey found that only 30 percent of women take a multivitamin with folic acid before pregnancy. There is an urgent need to teach women about the importance of increasing their consumption of folic acid by taking a daily vitamin pill, eating more fortified cereal grain products, and eating food naturally rich in folic acid.

Nationwide, Hispanic women have the highest rates of neural tube defects. In fact, in my home State of California, Hispanic mothers have the highest number of cases of neural tube defects than any other racial group and Mexican-born mothers have twice the risk of having babies with neural tube defects compared to United States-born mothers.

The Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999 will amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a national folic acid education program to prevent birth defects. This bill authorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in partnership with states and local public and private entities, to launch an education and public awareness campaign, conduct research to identify effective strategies for increasing folic acid consumption by women of reproductive capacity, and evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

The Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999 is supported by leading health organization, including the March of Dimes Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners, Council for Responsible Nutrition, American Association of University Affiliated Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Nurse-Midwives, American Public Health Association, Council of Women's and Infants' Specialty Hospitals, Easter Seals, National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Women's Health Network, and the Spina Bifida Association of America.

I would like to recognize the March of Dimes, the National Council on Folic Acid and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for their leadership and steadfast commitment to this issue. I would especially like to thank Jody Adams and here daughter, the March of Dimes Ambassador Kelsey Adams, for their hard work in publicizing this simple, yet highly effective, prevention strategy.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues, Congresswoman JO ANN EMERSON, as well as Senators ABRAHAM, KOHL, and BOND for their hard work in raising awareness about this vitally important issue. By getting the message out, we can help families across the country have healthy babies and save the lives of thousands of babies each year.

RECOGNIZING PELCO

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pelco, a world leader in the

design, development and manufacture of advanced closed circuit television systems and supporting equipment.

Pelco has a long prestigious history of offering high quality products and exceptional customer service. Pelco has become the most sought after product supplier in the industry.

Pelco operates from the largest CCTV manufacturing complex in the world. They produce a steady stream of enclosures, domes, mounts, pan/tilt units, matrix systems, and other CCTV electronic products in a never-ending pursuit of achieving 100 percent off-the-shelf-availability for its customers. Pelco is respected as a major product innovator. They manufacture a large number of special equipment item including explosion-proof and water-cooled camera enclosures, high security housing, and a series of award-winning microwave control/video systems. Pelco also produces the industry-acclaimed Legacy and Intercept product lines, each designed around Pelco's revolutionary Coaxitron video/control platform of single coax operation.

Pelco constantly strives to maintain its position as the most reliable supplier of CCTV systems in the industry. The company has established an impressive array of customers service programs including: Guaranteed Ship Dates, 24-hour Technical Assistance and 24-hour Turnaround on Replacement Parts and Repairs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Pelco for their achievements in becoming a world leader in the closed circuit video market. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Pelco many more years of continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, on July 19, 1999, I was unavoidably detained at LaGuardia Airport in New York due to poor weather conditions. The weather delays caused me to miss rollcall votes 308, 309, and 310. I would like the RECORD to reflect that had I been present, I would have voted in the affirmative on all three rollcall votes, numbers 308, 309, and 310.

TRIBUTE TO THE BRONX PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, once again it is with pride that I rise to pay tribute to the Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade, on its eleventh year of celebrating the culture and contributions of the Puerto Rican community to our nation.

The Bronx Puerto Rican Day Parade will be held on Sunday, August 1 in my South Bronx Congressional District. The event is the culmination of a series of activities surrounding Puerto Rican Week in the Bronx. This year's parade is dedicated to our children.

Under the leadership of its founder, Mr. Angel L. Rosario, and its president, Mr. Francisco Gonzalez, the Parade has grown into